



nasty!
nasty!
nasty!

High-control
practices at
work in
Duolingo?

"Just checking on that lesson you owe me."

- Duo from Duolingo

"Demand for Purity. The group constantly exhorts members to view the world as black and white, conform to the group ideology, and strive for perfection. The induction of guilt and/or shame is a powerful control device used here."

- from Wikipedia's entry on *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism* by Robert Jay Lifton, M.D., https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thought_Reform_and_the_Psychology_of_Totalism

"Technology is at its best when serving toolbelt theory, workflow thinking, and niche construction and at its worst when serving behaviorism, "efficiency", and techno-solutionism."

- *Stimpunks Glossary* Entry on **Techno-solutionism**, <https://stimpunks.org/glossary/techno-solutionism/>

"That... streak is impressive, I guess. Keep it going. Or don't."

- Lily from Duolingo

"...Then came my flight -- and with that, the end of my streak. It didn't take long for Duolingo's emails to shift in tone. ... 'Have you already gotten sick of learning Portuguese? ... It looks like you've learned how to say 'quitter' in Portuguese.'"

- Kelli María Korducki, "The world's meanest app", *Business Insider*, [https://](https://www.businessinsider.com/duolingo-meanest-app-nagging-notifications-melting-icon-gen-z-marketing-2024-7?op=1)

www.businessinsider.com/duolingo-meanest-app-nagging-notifications-melting-icon-gen-z-marketing-2024-7?op=1

"Dispensing of existence. The group has the prerogative to decide who has the right to exist and who does not."

- from Wikipedia's entry on **Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism** by Robert Jay Lifton, M.D., [https://](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thought_Reform_and_the_Psychology_of_Totalism)

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thought_Reform_and_the_Psychology_of_Totalism

**stop
being
nasty!**

(OR DON'T!)